



ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC PROTECTION CABINET

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NEWS RELEASE

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STATE NATIVE PLANT COORDINATOR RECEIVES VOLUNTEER AWARD *Award presented annually by Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 19, 2007) – Mary Carol Cooper received the 2007 Volunteer Steward Award presented by the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC).

Cooper began volunteering for the commission in 1993. Her first workday was at Brigadoon State Nature Preserve in Barren County, where she coordinated a group of Sierra Club members who had come to build a trail through the preserve's original tract.

Numerous workdays would follow in which Cooper would invite and coordinate organizations such as the Sierra Club and the Kentucky Native Plant Society. One of Cooper's volunteer days placed her on Blue Licks State Nature Preserve in Robertson County cutting cedar trees in January when the temperature dipped to three degrees.

Cooper is an officer with the Kentucky Exotic Pest Plant Council. She has worked with public outreach projects, including Weed Awareness Week. She hosted the 2003 Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council's annual symposium.

Serving the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources as their native plant coordinator reflects Cooper's commitment to the environment. At the Salato Wildlife Education Center in Frankfort, she educates visitors on the importance of using native plants in landscaping. Volunteers like Cooper are key to helping protect rare species on state nature preserves and enhancing visitor opportunities.

KSNPC's mission is to protect Kentucky's natural heritage by managing natural areas in a statewide nature preserve system and educating Kentuckians on the value and purpose of nature preserves and biodiversity conservation.

Information about the nature preserves commission can be found online at www.naturepreserves.ky.gov or by calling 502-573-2886.